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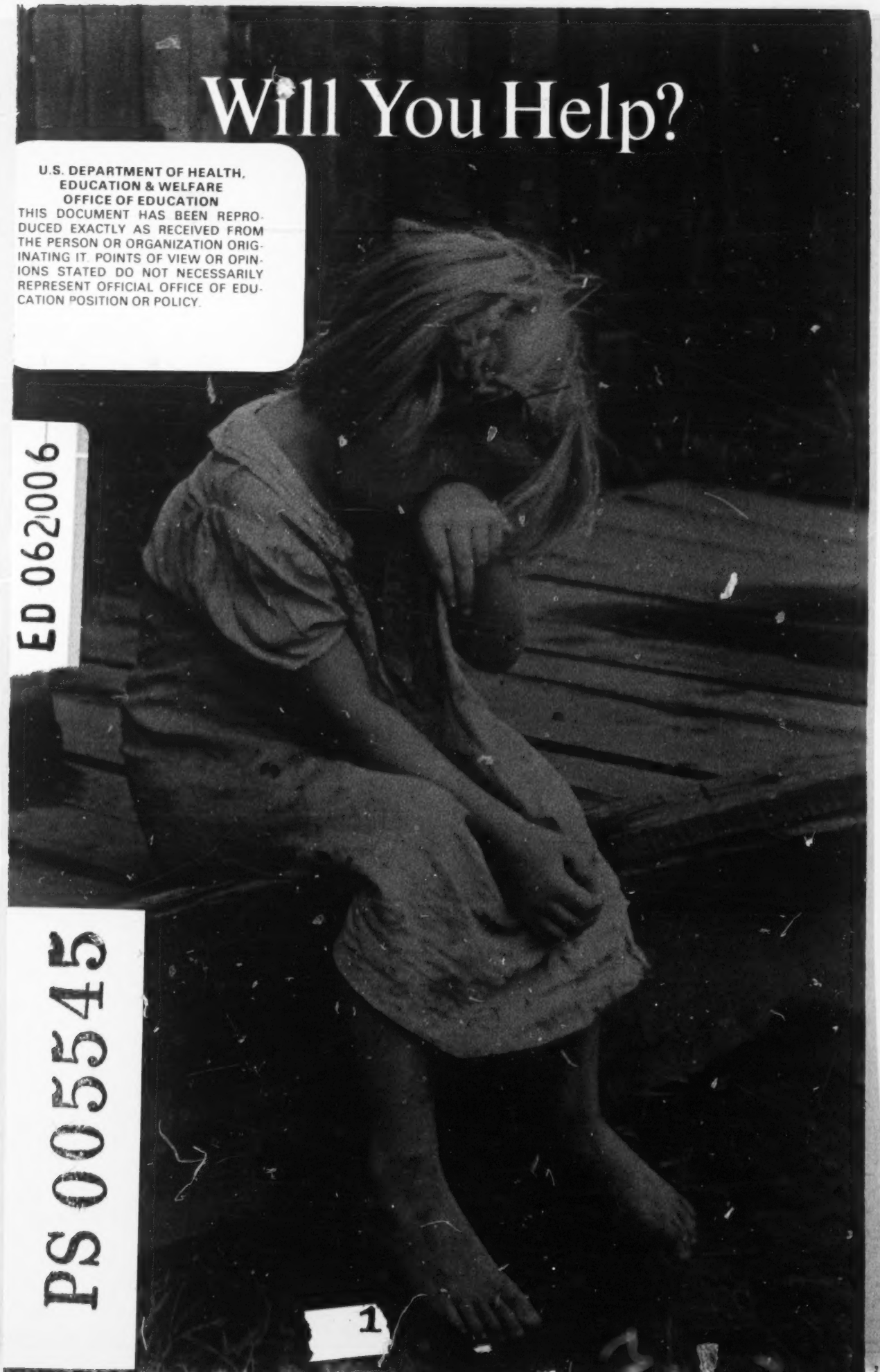
ABSTRACT

A booklet describing the plight of unwanted and uncared for small children is presented. The emotional and financial needs of these children are emphasized. The point is made that an adequate community social program can help the parents to organize a better life and can place those children without parents or with incapable parents in foster homes. (CK)



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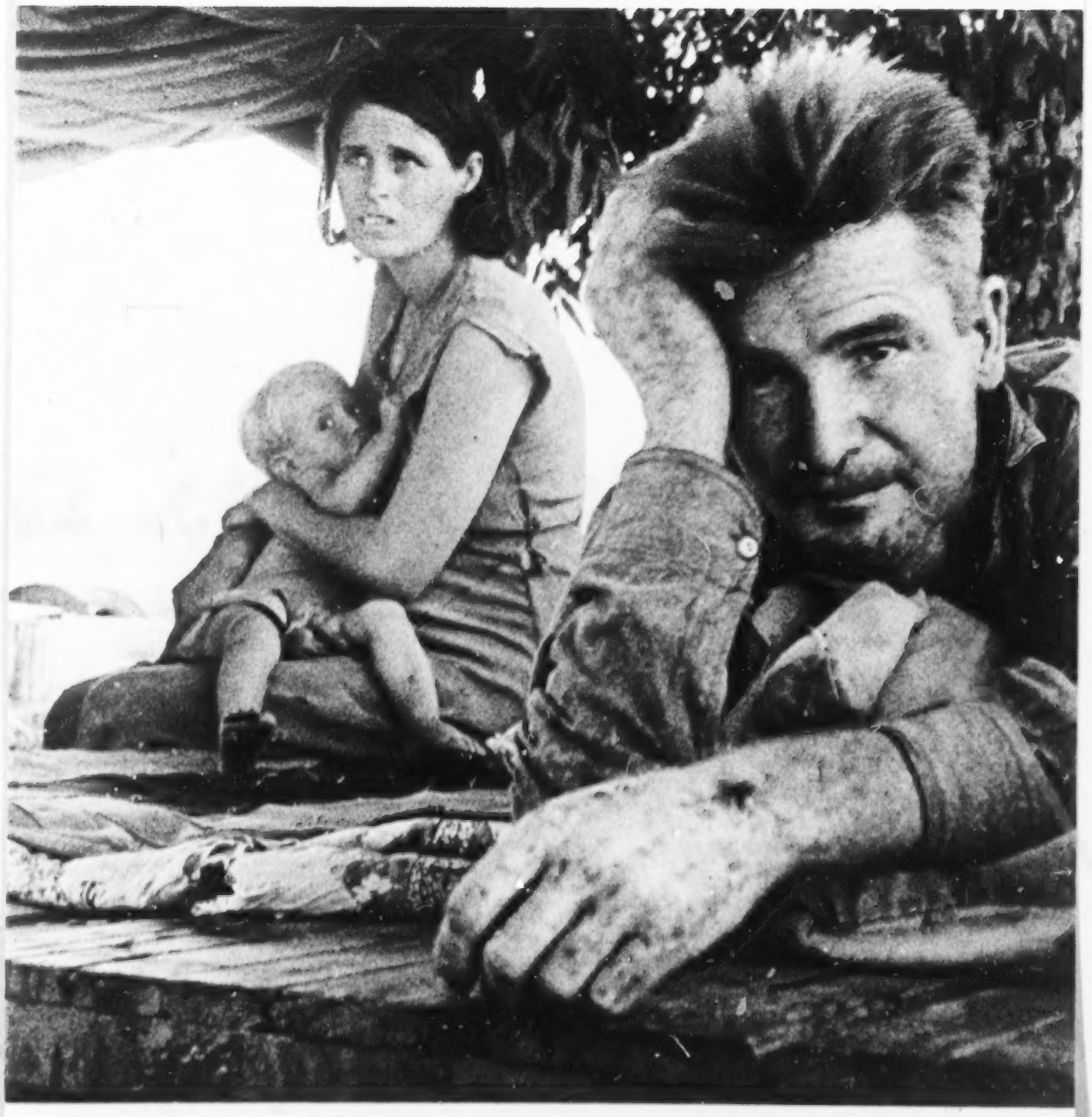
Children who lose their parents through desertion, illness, family disorganization or abuse, who feel they are not wanted, carry scars that no one sees.

They need somebody's help.

It is scary when your mother and father are not there to hear you yell. When will they come back?

How many children in your community are abandoned each year? Abused? Living in hazardous conditions?

Who in your community
knows about these children?
Who is trying to help them?



There are other hurt people in this picture that no one helps and almost everyone dislikes— **THE PARENTS.** The public thinks parents who harm or give up their children, are willingly bad people, but they too are victims. Research shows there is a strong tendency to repeat the patterns of one's parents.

"Sure I beat my children: you've got to make them mind -- my parents beat me."
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In many cases the problems—
the malignant cycle of poor
parenting and hurt children, and
again poor parenting—have grown
out of the hard conditions of poverty.

Poverty means for parents and children:

- Not enough to eat—no energy
- Infections and illness—no reserves
- Poor clothing—being different and outcast
- Failure in school—not capable
- Disorganized living—inability to plan for the future
- No work or demeaning jobs—hopelessness—" no good"

Every community needs social services and other related programs, especially in poverty areas, to bolster the waning strength of parents and teenagers toward the dream of "living happily ever after."

Acceptance and personal concern of the social worker can be a new beginning for the parents of the family. With patient help, the father and mother can draw from the strength of the social worker, can make better use of community resources, and can improve their functioning through:

- Adequate organization of time
- Performance of daily routines
- Better management and care of the children
- Better relationship with the boss, the neighbors, the school
- Less need for the oblivion of alcohol and drugs

Do the social workers in your community have the skill and the time for intensive, patient, ongoing work with parents, as well as placement and care of foster children?

Unless this child receives love and skilled help now, his scars will probably prevent him from becoming a useful citizen and a good parent to his own children.

Unfortunately, it is not always good for children to remain with their own family. It may be "nobody's fault," yet sometimes children need placement with carefully selected and capable foster families.

Accepting, warm, wise foster parents enjoy helping children grow and develop.
There are several kinds of foster parents:

- Emergency foster parents
- Temporary foster parents who help the child return home or be placed for adoption
- Specialized foster parents who help a child with unusual problems through corrective family living
- Specialized foster parents
- Permanent foster parents

How many foster parents are there in your community?
Are there enough of each kind?
How many are lost each year?
Are they receiving the support they require in order to meet the needs of hurt children?

Foster children may be any age from a few hours to 21 years. They may have mental or physical handicaps; many may have unusual behavior problems or may be emotionally disturbed. Many are hard to live with 24 hours a day. Very often life has already taught the child not to trust, not to believe, to get the most he can in any way possible before the chance is snatched away. They all need someone who can love them as they are and someone who proves to be trustworthy, again and again and again.

How many children, of what age, and with what problems need foster family services in your community?

- **Mental hospitals cost for each patient for each year about $2,500**
- **Federal penitentiaries cost $3,145**
- **Juvenile confinement—$7,400**
- **In addition there are the costs of court processes, welfare, riot damage, vandalism, lost productiveness and increased demands upon society.**

Many uncared for children become public charges for the rest of their lives—50 or 60 years. While we cannot put a dollar sign against a child's happiness and well-being, obviously the community pays *enough now* or a great deal more in later years. How many dollars is it costing your community for each foster child? What would be an adequate cost to bring happiness and well-being to all children needing foster family services in your community?

You are needed! You can make the difference:

What will you do for foster children as a Service Volunteer?

Call your Community Council (United Appeal), the president of the Board or the Director of the agencies providing foster family services, the State Department of Social Services, or your minister and tell them about your interests, your talents and the time that you have available.

Attend orientation meetings or interviews and decide how you can help best, such as:

- Tutoring a foster child behind in school
- Chauffeuring children to the hospital or doctor
- Helping a child to attend camp
- Teaching home management to parents
- Recruiting foster parents
- Participating in a speakers' bureau
- Contacting legislators regarding adequate budgets for foster children, etc.

Pledge yourself to a firm time schedule for the activity that you have chosen and let nothing interfere.

Become a spokesman for foster children and parents and an advocate of the community's responsibility *not* to be a part of institutional neglect and abuse of children, but instead to provide a good quality of services for them.

Citizens discuss Action for Foster Children with
Congressman Jack Kemp, Representative from Buffalo, New York

What will you do for foster children as an Action Volunteer?

Join with others to form a committee to improve foster family services in your community. Call the agencies listed above to locate other interested persons and make contact with important civic associations such as Rotary, Civitan, League of Women Voters, etc.

Plan and implement a survey in depth of the extent of need of the children and their families for social services and other resources.

Plan and study the services now being provided and identify the lacks and gaps.

Plan *practically* what your community can do to secure needed legislative changes, money, qualified staff, etc., within the next year.

Involve the whole community. Report to the whole community.

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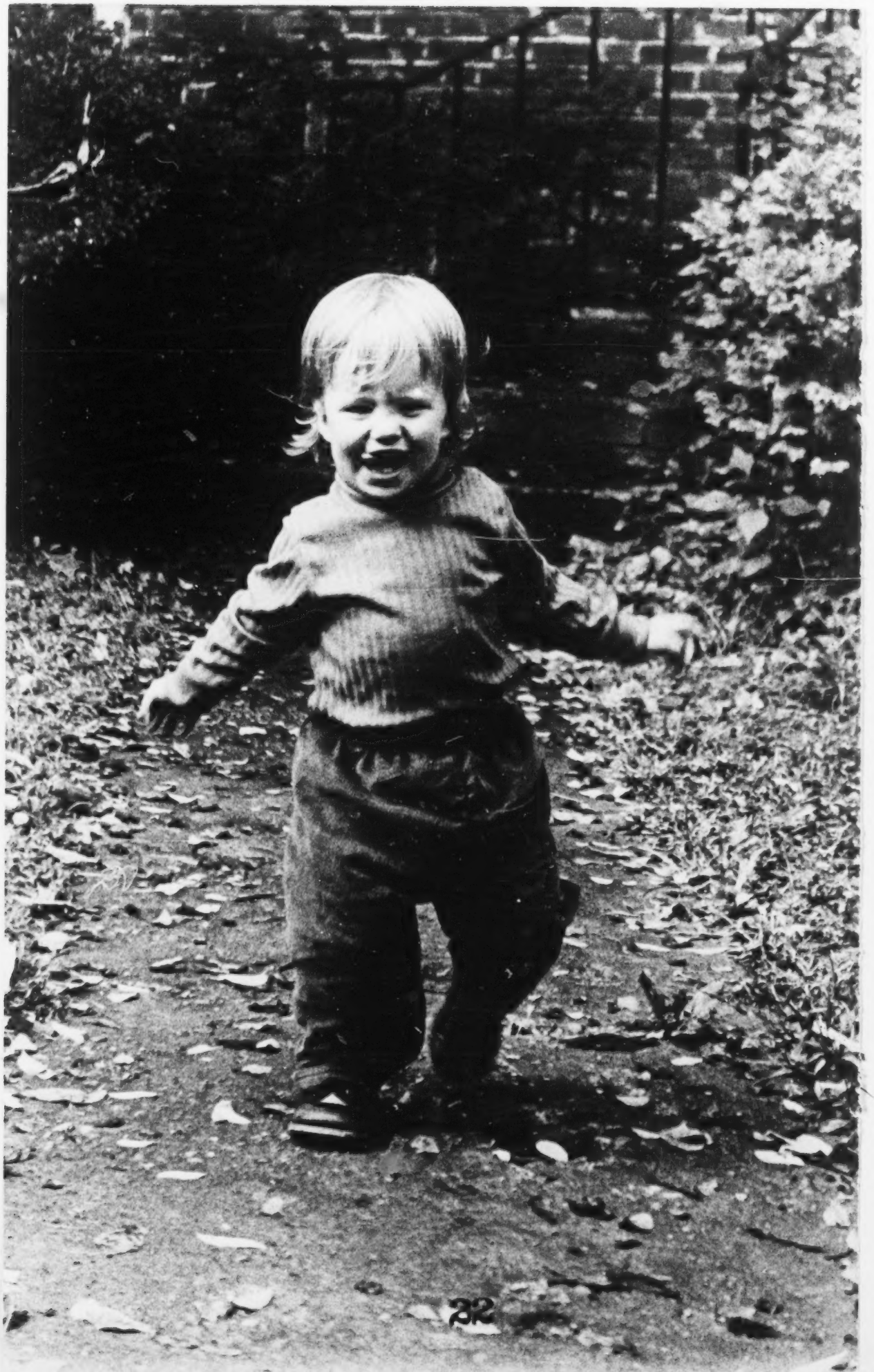
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It's up to you-
please help.

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